

## NOTES & COMMENTS

### Piety and learning

The unity of piety and learning was a motif identified by Dr Richard Riesen in his appreciation, published by the Scottish Church History Society, of Professor Alec Cheyne who died in 2006. Perhaps it would be appropriate for the *Records* to include a brief tribute to four other academics who passed away around that time and who, although not primarily historians themselves, made an immense contribution to the history of the Church. As Moderator in 1982 Professor John McIntyre held an historic meeting with Pope John Paul at New College. Before then he had already become widely known as Acting Principal of Edinburgh University. (The last churchman to head a Scottish University was George Adam Smith who retired from Aberdeen in 1935.) Professor McIntyre's interests included soteriology and the role of history in theology and, as Dr Riesen pointed out, he interpreted his predecessor John Baillie's view that knowledge of God comes not intuitively but in the world and its history.

Professor Thomas Torrance's year as Moderator was also outstanding, culminating in the Assembly which the Queen attended in person in her silver jubilee year. A student under Karl Barth, he emphasised that the Deity of Jesus is fundamental to the Christian faith. He expressed the hope that the Reformed tradition of his father and himself and the Anglican church of his mother and his wife would soon be united.

An ecumenical element also featured in the career of Professor John MacQuarrie, who was brought up in the Church of Scotland but moved to the Anglican Communion while teaching in the United States. Subsequently he became professor of divinity at Oxford. His writings combined existentialism and systematic theology. Professor James Barr, whose grandfather was the subject of a paper to the Society in 1982, had an international reputation as an Old Testament scholar and held several chairs. He was chosen to represent divinity at a special honorary graduation ceremony at the four-hundredth anniversary of Edinburgh

University in 1983 and was an example of the former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Runcie's view that a classical education is a defence against religious fundamentalism. Right up to his last post at Vanderbilt he had a high reputation as a teacher, unlike one of his predecessors for whom, as he wrote in the *Records* in 1998, preparing the next day's lecture was less important than the state of his own soul.

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